

From: Scott Dunbar
To: US DOJ
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Subject: Wired News :Windows XP: EXtra Proprietary

A note from Scott Dunbar:

Obviously, the DOJ is incapable or unwilling to bring Micro\$oft to justice. You guys "prosecute", and the villians get worse.

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<http://www.wired.com/news/print/0,1294,48011,00.html>

Windows XP: EXtra Proprietary
By Michael Tiemann

2:00 a.m. Oct. 31, 2001 PST

Microsoft has launched its latest version of Windows, Windows XP (eXtra Proprietary). Tightening its stranglehold on all industries that use computers, Microsoft's XP features are certain to further degrade customer choice, cost/performance and, in some cases, even civil liberties.

Let's start with the premise of any free market economy: customer choice. The Windows XP default installation process offers one choice for Internet connectivity: Microsoft's proprietary MSN network. On top of this, Microsoft also has specially tuned its MSN.com site to reject connections from non-Microsoft browsers, including Netscape, Mozilla and Opera.

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Microsoft has been convicted of monopolistic practices by not one, but two courts, and has had its appeal to the Supreme Court denied. It might make one wonder why Microsoft is being so bold with its exclusionary, eXtra Proprietary technologies. It's because Microsoft believes that time is on its side; the 1995 abuses are only now being judged, and there's no remedy or no penalty in sight.

In the meantime, Microsoft has been earning \$1 billion a month net income from its monopoly, money users pay because they believe they have no choice. Should users who have been unable to free themselves from Microsoft's regular proprietary technologies expect life to get any better by buying into Microsoft's more powerful eXtra Proprietary technologies? Let's see.

One of the most controversial new eXtra Proprietary technologies is Windows Media. In a twist that no framer of the U.S. Constitution could have imagined, Microsoft is using patents to prevent software interoperability with its eXtra Proprietary technologies. Of course, Windows Media has to compete with the immensely popular MP3 format, but Windows XP limits the quality of MP3 encoding and decoding. By intentionally degrading the quality of all competing technologies, and by allowing only Microsoft-approved uses of its own technologies, Windows Media has the potential to create yet another monopoly for Microsoft -- a monopoly that extends from software to content. Such a monopoly would change our entertainment economy from one of unlimited content at limited cost, to one of limited content with unlimited costs.

Moore's Law promises that silicon technologies will offer 2x price/performance improvements every 12 to 18 months. Yet every version of Windows (and Windows XP is no exception) conspires to steal most if not all of the dividends of Moore's Law. The result is that PCs have become much more powerful, but not much cheaper nor much more functional. Microsoft Windows, on the other hand, has become much more bloated.

Microsoft is hoping thousands of users will rush to stores and spend nearly \$100 for their latest OS. Don't do it. EXtra Proprietary technologies require extra CPU speed and memory, virtually requiring a hardware upgrade to go with your software upgrade. Indeed, Microsoft has the audacity to suggest that if your PC is more than two years old, you should junk it and get a new one. While PC vendors may welcome that message, such a wasteful approach is actually bad for the economy because it bankrupts the buyers that keep the economy going.

Another eXtra Proprietary feature is Passport, a recent winner of a Big Brother Award. Passport collects user information (name, phone numbers, credit card numbers, etc.) and stores that information at Microsoft. Passport is the "how" that then gives Microsoft control over the "who, what, when, where" and possibly "why" of Internet transactions. Microsoft is happy to let customers exchange personal privacy for convenience within Microsoft's proprietary network.

A writer for the Christian Science Monitor recently observed: "More than anything else, XP reminds me of a tourist trap. You arrive in a foreign city, and a handsome stranger walks up to you and says he will show you around the city. He offers to take you to the very best shops and restaurants. But you soon realize that he is taking you only to places that are owned by his relatives or by someone who gives him a kickback."

Microsoft's eXtra Proprietary go beyond mere tourism: Most users find that with Microsoft's Passport they cannot get out of Microsoft Country once they enter. Is this really

where you wanted to go today?

Let's get out of this vicious trap the way we got in: by controlling what we do with our money. If you are already running Microsoft's products, do the sensible thing and **BOYCOTT THE MONOPOLIST**. Let Microsoft's latest products sit in warehouses until Microsoft comes to their senses and removes all the eXtra Proprietary technologies they've been engineering over the past several years. Wait until Microsoft offers a level playing field to other operating systems, applications and network service providers.

For those of you who cannot stand still, join a LUG (Linux Users Group) and maybe upgrade to Linux. Aside from saving a bundle on licensing fees (there are none), you'll get unprecedented freedom and control. With thousands of Red Hat Certified Engineers, and millions of Linux enthusiasts, any configuration running on any hardware can be supported at a fair price (determined by a free market of competing vendors) for as long as you want. Suddenly, hardware and software upgrades will be your choice, not a choice dictated to you. Suddenly, money you spend will be on things that you value, not things you are forced to pay for. Suddenly, you will begin to see the engine of growth that Moore's law enables come back to life, and the dividends it pays will be ones you can put in your bank account, not the bank account of a convicted monopolist.

Michael Tiemann is the chief technical officer of Red Hat.

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